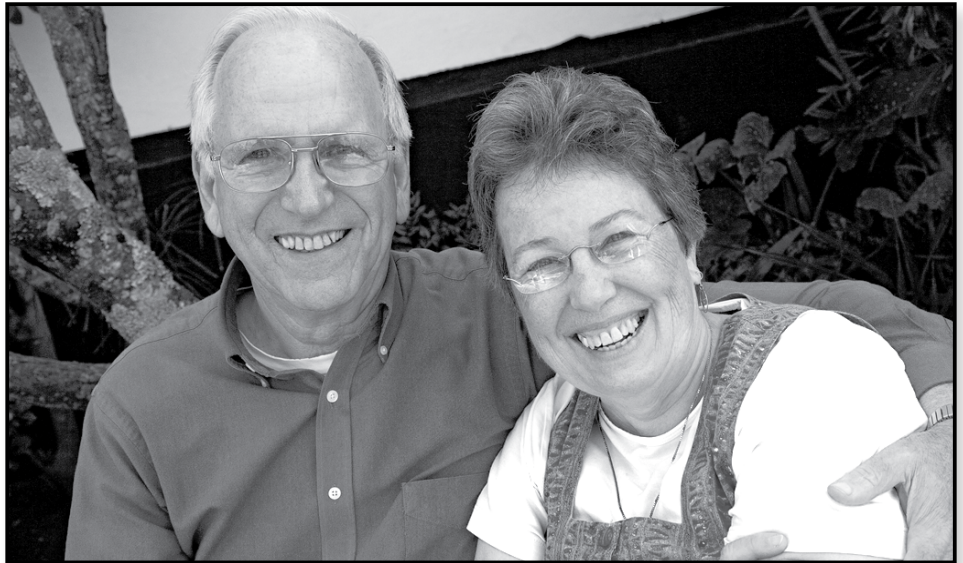


Editor's Note:

In the wake of Kenya's disputed December 27th elections, large portions of the country faced violence and fear. From the eye of the storm in Eldoret, Dr. Joe Mamlin and Sarah Ellen Mamlin wrote dozens of daily messages home to their family and their colleagues at the IU-Kenya Partnership. Likely, you have read about this crisis in the international media. But we thought you would appreciate the opportunity to read a very condensed summary of the Mamlins' dispatches. (A longer version is viewable on our website, www.iukenya.org under the 'In the News' heading.) These messages document a very personal and first-hand view of a month that challenged not only the viability of the Indiana-Moi partnership, but the future of an entire nation. Unless otherwise noted, these messages are written by Joe Mamlin.



Dispatches from a Month of Crisis



Joe and Sarah Ellen Mamlin (Photo by Tyagan Miller)

December 29, 2007

AM: I feel something wonderful is happening in Kenya. There was every reason to expect chaos with these elections but all is quiet. One can sense a combination of pride and excitement as Kenyans begin to sense the real power of their vote. Surely lots of "messes" await us but hard to deny evidence of a real growth spurt.

PM: Hold on a bit! I just made the mistake of trying to go downtown in Eldoret and that turned out to be impossible. People are running everywhere. Traffic rules were suspended as everyone began driving away from town as fast as they could. I felt fortunate to make my way down the road by the Siam restaurant and back home. So much for my usual optimism. Bob, our gardener, just made it to our compound at the same time. He saw two people on the road with their throats

cut. Violent demonstrations are now popping up across Kenya.

Sarah Ellen and I, along with Shawn and family, are now on a lock down in the compound. Will keep you informed. All of this started when the population began to sense (incumbent President Mwai) Kibaki was closing the gap with (challenger Raila Odinga) in suspicious ways.

my patient for over 5 years. She is now living in our house.

Truth is the first casualty of war and it is so hard to get facts. But it is clearly getting worse on this beautiful New Year's Day. We are taking in all people in danger without regard to anything. We have pooled our food and will share what we have. The IU compound is just as

full as we projected for this time of the year but instead of US visitors, we are surrounded by grateful friends.

Deep in their hearts they fear just the kind of genocide that seemed impossible even in Rwanda. Surely, we will not let that happen again—not here.

January 1, 2008

11AM: In some parts of town it is getting worse. Gangs are killing and burning. Rumors of rival tribal gangs on the way.

Helen is here with us. She watched her landlady die from panga (machete) cuts and her husband die with bow and arrow. She has been

The most fearful words imaginable just hit my ears this morning. One of those in my house asked when is the US coming in to save everyone from another Rwanda? Deep in their hearts they fear just the kind of genocide that seemed impossible even in Rwanda. Surely, we will not let that happen again—not here.

January 1, 2008

9:00 PM: This will go down as the worst day of my life. In the emergency room I step over the dead to reach for those dying.

When I headed down the hall toward the ER one could tell we were in real trouble. Every bench was filled with injured people. I saw one woman sitting stoically with the skin peeling off her legs from her burns—she was a survivor from the dreadful church burning I was about to hear about. There were so many children among the group waiting for care. Several bodies were on the floor still on stretchers. The hospital was out of needles, suture material and IV fluids. They were reduced to using the same needle as they moved from patient to patient.



Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital Emergency Room on January 1st, 2008.

Called the owner of Eldochem (a pharmacy) and he met me at his shop within 10 minutes. Loaded my car to the brim with all of his IV fluids, tubing and suture sets and returned to the ER.

Got our food truck and formed a caravan: Armed guards in front and behind, our truck, I was in a Kenyan Red Cross truck. We drove to the Eldoret airport to pick up supplies flown in to us by the Red Cross. We loaded literally tons of wonderful supplies and just got them back to the hospital.

The drive to the airport is just too much. There are fires in all directions as homes and shops burn.

Literally hundreds of refugees walk along the road. Sometimes it is 30-50 children and a single adult walking along carrying what they can. The road itself was cluttered by large stones that represented road blocks where they look in the car for those who are the “wrong tribe.” There must be 20 blocked areas in that short drive. Passed many burned out homes and shops on the way.



Boulders used as roadblocks in Eldoret, Kenya

Just how could this beautiful country and people and program be so radically changed in just a few hours?

Standing on the tarmac of the airport, I could see smoke coming up on the horizon in all directions. Just how could this beautiful country and people and program be so radically changed in just a few hours?

We prepare for our first meal of the day. Up to 70 of our Kenyan friends have found peace in our compound. We will eat as a family.

January 2, 2008

As far as I know, we have not lost a single AMPATH staff member or patient. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to run clinics since there are no matatus (van-taxi) running. It took almost three hours for one of our pharmacists to walk by foot to give us access to drugs. Most staff are busy securing safety of loved ones and most patients are either afraid or can't travel.

I took heart in an ER this morning when I no longer needed to step over a body.

Eldoret is quiet today but all roads in and out remain blocked by unpredictable gangs. Many residential areas of Eldoret are insecure and many of our friends are simply scared to death.

I took heart in an ER this morning when I no longer needed to step over a body.

IU House has grown from the two of us to 130 Kenyan guests, half of them children, each with their own story and need for protection. They were from every tribe—never, never an issue inside the compound; a life and death issue outside. Most of the families join in to make living together a community. People cooked together and washed together.

(January 2, continued)

Overall, though, we have witnessed sad evidence that we as a human family have a lot of growing yet to do. When you think a moment, you realize the IU-Kenya Program at its core symbolizes what is so critically needed by Kenyan leadership. This is not a program dedicated to building medical schools or even stamping out a pandemic. At its heart, it is a program that screams "Yes" in a world too ready to say "No."



A tent in a displaced-persons camp near Eldoret

This is our first "work day" since this all fell apart. Kimaiyo and I will survey the staff and supplies at all clinics.

Major problems is danger of road travel and the absence of petrol for our vehicles. We plan to run clinics with their local staff only. I will not head out to Mosoriot this morning for the first Wednesday in over six years.

January 3

The ER is very quiet today. I view this a possible sign that we are turning the corner. I realize that most roads outside Eldoret are still blocked but think we would have heard if a rash of new injuries were out there waiting help.

Still no matatus in town. All employees and patients had to travel by foot today. Hate to imagine what might be happening to adherence to medication, etc for many of our patients. Sarah Ellen and I have returned to full tanks of diesel since a station was open today.

There is an eerie quiet around here today. We are either on our way out of this mess or it is the calm before hell descends on this place. My personal guess is we are turning the corner.

Elizabeth came to me after rounds this morning. She has been my patient for some time. She said, "I have been burned out. All is gone. I have only 100 shillings (about \$1.50) and these clothes I am wearing." I had never wondered about which tribe Elizabeth was from before so now I asked. Her response was "Kikuyu." I gave her 1,000 Kenyan shillings to pay her fare to join the long caravan in town headed for the safety of Central Province. Gave her my water and my three secret breakfast bars. I wanted to give her an embrace as she left. Did give her a two month supply of antiretrovirals. Pray I will see her again.

January 4

From Sarah Ellen Mamlin: *(who serves as the warden [US Embassy liaison with U.S. citizens] for the Eldoret area)* The American representative said basically the Embassy is advising Americans to stay put and quiet within their compounds because we are not the object of the roving gangs' wrath. We all agreed that this is a tribal conflict. Their advice is STAY IN YOUR HOMES!!

We were asked to emphasize that if we are harboring any refugees, we are creating a risk for ourselves. Be conscious of that! We also responded that those of us here may have calculated the risk . . .

From Joe: Kimaiyo called a meeting of some of AMPATH leadership—at least those accessible. It is worth noting that 30-40% of those who showed up had themselves been forced to vacate their homes. Our intention was to begin sorting out how to put this monster back together. Gracious me, the problems are very challenging.

It is likely that less than 5% of patients have been able to reach us this week! This has enormous implications for infected babies and potential resistance, etc. We decided to move immediately to try and reach our patients since they clearly struggle to get to us. Many are displaced, some evacuated to other parts of the country, some without access to transport since matatus are not running and others fear attack on the road.

Many of our staff have either lost their homes or afraid to return. Many are homeless and lost everything. We would like for those trying to raise money to help us in this crisis to consider forming AMPATH staff and patient support funds. We will use this to move people to safety, pay rent, clothes, emergency food and get them back to work. Please add this to your request for help in the US.

It felt good to be fighting back—even in a small way.

January 4 PM

We have numerous messages re: risk to ourselves by harboring Kikuyu in our compound. We will NEVER ask anyone to leave nor will we turn anyone away.

Sarah Ellen and I were too busy to go to dinner tonight, so one of our guests brought us food—beans and rice but at least no ugali tonight. As I carried the plates back over to the main dining room, I heard singing. I came back and told Sarah Ellen we needed a three minute break from our work and we walked back together.

The adults had created their own worship service. They all sang together then they all begin to pray at the same time. It was not like any prayer I had ever seen before. Likely each person there was from a different denomination but each prayed aloud simultaneously.

It had a beauty that defined prayer. Tears rolled down all cheeks as they became one with God. The prayer of many voices transitioned into beautiful music. Every tribe now at war prayed and cried together tonight on the IU compound.

I know church when I “feel” it down deep.

This was church.

January 5

AM: Late morning I went out again. If the politicians can avoid pouring gasoline on the fire, I see a rapid return to safety but not “normal” as we have known it. I was able to get by a machinegun toting guard and actually cash an IU check in Barclays. I then was able to get a haircut!

By mid week, we should have a handle on just what we are facing in AMPATH.

I predict that the greatest loss will be loss of spirit—wounded by the realization that a bit of Rwanda is in all of us.

PM: Gracious, is it hard to read the tea leaves here.

Lucy spent the night in her home last night. I thought she would come to take Daniel home from our compound. Instead she returns with her back pack with nothing but fear in her eyes. She says that all houses in her community are abandoned and most are now being looted since they know no one is home.

All I know is fear continues to grip these poor people. The potential for healing is deeply submerged at the moment. We will see.

Just letting you share in the schizophrenic rollercoaster ride that is now our life. I am capable of sending you good news and in five minutes describe horror—and *vice versa*.

January 7

We have turned the corner. Loads of work but we are on the way. Some people are already beginning to prepare to leave the IU compound.

Hope is popping up everywhere. Keep your fingers crossed. Some clinics are beginning to see over 100 patients per day again.

January 10

Kitale (clinic) looked like a mess. With only 40-50 patients showing up per day, it was frightening. We sent a team up there today and luckily, over 200 patients showed up and all of a sudden there is hope again there.

Our hot line is really generating lots of calls. All labs are up and running. AMPATH food will begin distant distribution tomorrow for the first time.

January 11th

Poor Jennifer, one of our star clinical officers at Turbo, rode back to Eldoret with me. She had a typical but painful story. She is Kalenjin and her husband is Kikuyu. The husband and her three children were evacuated to Nairobi for safety. Her mother advised her not to come home to her rural village for safety since she married a Kikuyu. She is frightened in her home alone. Several of the last few nights she has chosen to sleep on the lawn of the Eldoret Police Station. I invited her to our home if she feels unsafe in her own home.

I have been amazed by the loyalty and commitment of the AMPATH Kenyan staff. They have taken every risk to stay at their posts.

January 15

I have been amazed by the loyalty and commitment of the AMPATH Kenyan staff. They have taken every risk to stay at their posts. Many

of our workers have lost homes or have been forced to separate members of their families to safer locations but the core of AMPATH is working overtime to meet the needs of our patients. I am so proud of my Kenyan colleagues—they cannot be stopped.

I fully expect all AMPATH sites to weather this storm, find the majority of their patients and continue to grow in comprehensive care. Let's keep our eye on the target: Careful attention to those infected and affected by HIV in western Kenya. That problem has not gone away and neither will we.

January 21

All is quiet at the moment in Eldoret. All nearby roads are open.

One of the nice “hugs” in this chaos occurred this morning when Christine reported for duty. Christine, a Kikuyu, proudly stated, “I will not change my name until someone pays the right number of cows!”

January 25

While (peace) talks continue, so do fires and death. At least 8 have been killed and perhaps over 100 homes burned in Nakuru. Gangs have blocked the road to Nairobi from Nakuru—at least at the moment.

These days remain tense while we see if Kofi Annan can break through with the peace talks. If Annan fails, we could see even worse violence.

January 28

I was unable to travel this morning secondary to road blocks. At the moment, all roads in and out of Eldoret are blocked. We will concentrate today on safety of our minority workers in AMPATH. We remain in a tough phase of this journey.

January 29

All roads in and out of Eldoret remain closed. Battles at roadblocks last night resulted in 5 people shot on the west side of town [one dead, four in the MTRH–Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital] and one shot at a road block between Eldoret and Burnt Forest. Don’t know for sure but suspect most represents police no longer “shooting in the air.”

Eldoret remains tense but quiet.

Kimaiyo is busy doing a full assessment by phone of all sites and their stress. One brilliant new medical officer is Kikuyu. She dares to report for duty but we cannot send her out.

January 30

Overwhelming numbers of Kenyans are just as outraged as the outside world by what is happening here. You never see tribalism among our staff, the hospital, medical students and on and on.

But in a land of poverty with up to 40% unemployment, politicians have long found the fodder for their lust for power. The tribal “card” is always in the background here. The right match can light a firestorm. And as you know, mob mentality is unpredictable.

The Kenyans in this (IU) house would give their lives for those around them regardless of tribe. I see that same commitment all around me. There are so many examples of Kalenjins and Kikuyu meeting among themselves and protecting each other. Last week it was a Kikuyu that came to me and pleaded that I provide funding for a Luo staying in our home whose son had just died in Kisumu. The good stories go on and on, but so does the violence.



Javan Odinga

January 30

When one writes the story of these days, we need to remember Javan Odinga.

A plea came last night from Kapsabet that their bible college had three Kikuyu who needed to get out and they saw no way to escape. They called Sarah Ellen for help. She asked Javan if he would be willing to take her car and

give it a try. For your information, Kapsabet is about an hour drive from here. I had travelled that road in the morning and knew of many road blocks, but had been able to get around all of them. I feared for Javan if the road blocks were manned by gangs. They would surely kill the three Kikuyu and likely burn the car and perhaps even Javan. He and Sarah Ellen discussed taking a blanket to hide the three.

Javan left before 4 AM for Kapsabet. One road block was not passable but was not manned. Javan is a heavy weight champion body builder. He got out of the car and alone lifted the log off the road. He was in Kapsabet

by 5AM. He safely took the three Kikuyu to the safety of the Eldoret airport. They flew out on the plane that

brought Naomi and Paul back to us. He brought them on to the IU House.

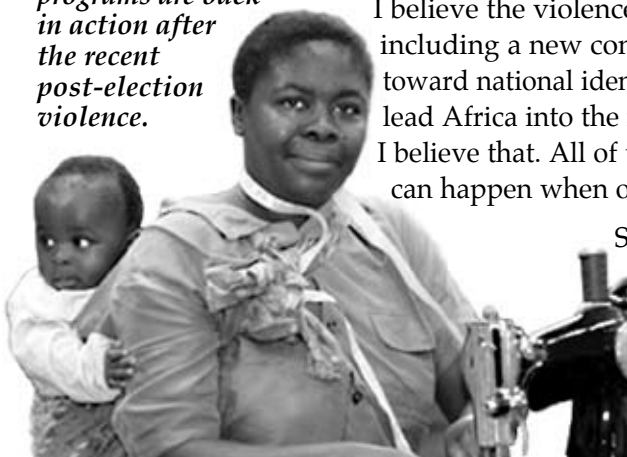
Hours later, Kapsabet exploded into violence. Cars are burning and several have been killed. I have no doubt that these three owe their lives to Javan.

Let the record show that Javan is Luhya and he risked his life for three Kikuyus. That doesn’t make the press but is the best of this place in action.

Let the records show that Javan is Luhya and he risked his life for three Kikuyus.

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Imani Workshop and AMPATH's other core programs are back in action after the recent post-election violence.



If you are interested in knowing the latest information about the Indiana-Kenya Partnership, join the 700-plus individuals who receive updates by email.

To add your name to the list, simply email a request to Fran Quigley at: quigley2@iupui.edu.

January 31

We face an uncertain future here. Deep in my heart, I believe the violence will subside; political reform including a new constitution will create a magnet toward national identity and Kenya will once again lead Africa into the mainstream of the 21st Century. I believe that. All of this pain will inform us all what can happen when one's vigilance is compromised.

Sarah Ellen headed to bed at 3AM today, just as I got up to start my day. We have learned to love each other more than ever—we are a team. We are supported by the love of our family and the prayers of much of Indianapolis. Perhaps it is too easy to use the phrase “praying for you” or for one to diminish the significance of that comment directed your way. We now cherish each and every prayer. We find strength each day as extended hands from the Indianapolis community. IU, Sarah Ellen and I did not ask for this new “assignment.” History has made it ours to do. IU, Indianapolis and our team on the ground here will not fail in what is now our journey.

The IU-Kenya Partnership
Gazeti

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
IU-Kenya Partnership's AMPATH program weathered one of the most turbulent and violent months in Kenya's history. See inside for Joe and Sarah Ellen Mamlin's daily reports on the struggle they and our Kenyan colleagues and friends faced, and how AMPATH emerged to continue providing care to 60,000 HIV-positive patients throughout western Kenya.

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